THE SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION
Record

Michigan Child Support Collections • Causes of AFDC Errors • Clients Sound Off • Child Neglect • State News • Publications

Social and Rehabilitation Service
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Volume 2/Number 7/ September 1975

This poster is for children eligible for Medicaid and is available to state and county agencies in an 11"× 14" standup and a 20"× 23" wall size; blank space at bottom for agency address.

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Record

Volume 2, Number 7 September 1975

ARTICLES

2 How Michigan Increased Child Support Collections — David L. Bailey
Michigan's remarkable record is analyzed in this incisive question-and-answer article.

8 Clients Sound Off — Bea Chapman
"Tell us about you!" Maine's Department of Health and Welfare told its clients . . . and then publicized the responses. See what the staff learned.

10 How Effective Are Social Services? — David Eppley
An exploratory evaluation of five sites contains a number of lessons.

18 Color Me Grey — Dorothy Sutherland
A look at child neglect, "a severe social problem with many grey areas, hard to define precisely, hard to treat successfully, and more difficult to prevent."

25 "What Causes AFDC Errors?" — Katherine Berry and Lawrence Greenfield, Ph.D.
How New Jersey undertakes to decrease chances for errors.

DEPARTMENTS

7 Research and Demonstrations

16 State News

24 Publications and Films

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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How Michigan Increased Child Support Collections

Some States, hustling to beef up their child support efforts under a new amendment to the Social Security Act (see Social and Rehabilitation Record, June 1975), are discovering that Title IV-D calls for some significant changes.

However, those States already conducting active child support programs are finding themselves well along the road to compliance.

In the latter category is Michigan, which last year topped all States in AFDC-related child support collections with a total of $44 million.

However, 5 years ago the picture in Michigan was quite different. Efforts to shift the burden for child support off AFDC and back to those legally responsible and financially able met with only modest success.

Local departments of social services offices attempted to secure voluntary support agreements from the absent parent—when they could find him—but more often than not these attempts failed.

Even when a voluntary agreement was arranged, the department faced the probability that this agreement would not be honored. Inevitably, voluntary support payments stopped. The reason was obvious: the absent parent had exhibited his true intent when he left home.

What happened to improve Michigan's child support collection record so remarkably over just a few years? To get some answers, the Record talked to David L. Bailey, director of the Office of Central Registry at the Michigan Department of Social Services.

QUESTION: Michigan is one of the States doing an outstanding job in the area of child support collections. So what's been happening on bottomline in Michigan since the Department of Social Services began actively pursuing child support in AFDC cases?

MR. BAILEY: We've grown immeasurably. In calendar year 1974 the Friend of the Court transmitted to us $44 million in child support for AFDC-related cases. Half of this was Michigan's and half went to the Federal Government, because that's the share they participate in in AFDC. In calendar year 1973, it was $39 million, and in calendar year 1972, it was $28 million, so the results are rather fantastic.

As a matter of fact, I don't know of any other State that beat us last year in child support collections. I believe the State of California collected $43 million on child support alone. The State of Massachusetts I believe was around $17 or $18 million. The State of Washington was around $20 million. Those four States are the leaders. Some States collected only $1 or $2 million. I think this picture will change, however, once support collection under IV-D gets underway in each State. I'm sure they will realize a growth similar to that we've seen.

QUESTION: But what about the cost of collecting this money?

MR. BAILEY: Michigan's financial input has been $5.3 million in the last couple of years, most of which was spent to bolster the staffs of prosecuting attorneys and friends of the court throughout the State. So the result of $44 million for the expenditure of $5.3 million is rather startling. We would have obtained some of this child support anyway, so we do

not claim the $44 million can be entirely credited to the $5.3 million, but certainly the vast majority of it can.

This year I have been fortunate in obtaining $8 million from the Legislature for our child support program.

QUESTION: Are there perhaps unique characteristics of Michigan that account for this good track record?

MR. BAILEY: First of all, Michigan is the only State which has a friend of the court system statewide. We have had this since 1919. The new Federal law mandates that child support services be extended to non-AFDC recipients as well as AFDC recipients, and of course the friend of the court has done this in Michigan since 1919.

I think a further example of an outstanding thing in Michigan for child support is that the friend of the court is empowered with enforcement tools, unlike many other States. The circuit court has delegated to the friend of the court the issuing of orders to show cause why someone should not be held in contempt. The statute also empowers the friend of the court to use wage assignments in collecting child support, and consequently you have a great deal of accountability at one single and central place, the friend of the court.

QUESTION: I understand you work with both friend of the court and prosecuting attorneys through a "cooperative reimbursement" program under which Department of Social Services provides certain funds to prosecuting attorneys and friends of the court. These funds provide additional staff to follow outstanding support orders in AFDC-related cases. Perhaps you can explain more about your relationship to both these groups.

MR. BAILEY: In Michigan, it is the duty of the prosecuting attorney to establish paternity and to secure the support order in an AFDC case. Once he has done this, that order is transmitted or delivered to the friend of the court whose duty is to collect it. So the two must work very closely together. Obviously, if we do not get new support orders or orders of affiliation entered, the friend of the court will not be able to act. Conversely, the securing of these court orders would be futile if the friend of the court didn't collect.

The Department of Social Services enters the picture to make sure the friend of the court and the prosecutor are promptly notified when public assistance is granted, and the child support specialist in the county social services office then follows up with the friend of the court and prosecutor. On the other hand, the friend of the court and prosecutor may follow up in gleaning other information from the support specialist. All this should be done speedily because they are truly supposed to be specialists in the field.

QUESTION: Does the section of title IV-D that provides for the return of certain child support monies to the counties as an incentive for their cooperation mean that you will no longer need to conduct a cooperative reimbursement program? Will title IV-D pick this up?

MR. BAILEY: No. The cooperative reimbursement program will continue and grow. We see no diminution at all of the cooperative reimbursement program. Instead I see a growth. I was given more money in order to see that it grows.

QUESTION: Perhaps you can tell me what you see as some of the public relations implications of child support collection efforts. I'm thinking about some of the concerns which have been expressed about certain aspects of title IV-D—concerns about the Federal Parent Locator Service, the authorization of Federal courts to enforce child support orders, and the use of Internal Revenue Service records.

MR. BAILEY: Certainly the "big brother" aspect is a real concern and it's a concern to me, also. However, the HEW regulations provide adequate security and privacy safeguards, so I don't think that argument against IV-D really holds water.

I think if the people dealing with child support use the information for the sole purpose of handling a child support-related matter, then you don't have a problem. But wherever you have people, you're going to have a few problems. You cannot, even by legislation, negate abuse. You can only help to minimize it.

I have had people say that the Federal courts have no business getting into child support. Here again, there are those few cases where you have to have some avenue to pursue child support through the Federal courts. A case in point—until this statute came along we had no garnishment procedure against the Federal employee.

Are we then to say that the Federal employee is immune from garnishment for the payment of child support? I think he should pay just like anybody else should pay, and to that end the Federal garnishment was a necessary thing. We will not use any Federal remedies in Michigan until we have exhausted our own, and we think ours are pretty good. But we do have the tools.

The use of Internal Revenue records is another story. IRS does not choose to get involved. I am not sure they have the proper mechanism to be involved anyway. As a matter of fact, we are still talking about that in the Federal IV-D regulation writing committee of which I'm a member.

QUESTION: What has been the reaction of clients to your child support efforts? Particularly the reaction among women who may be reluctant to pursue the missing husband or to take part in efforts to find him simply because they are afraid of possible retaliation on his part. Perhaps there are other women who simply feel that it is none of the State's business. What is the picture in terms of client cooperation and client attitudes?

MR. BAILEY: Except for the field of the paternity, we have had very good cooperation. In December 1971, legislation was passed in Michigan giving the Department of Social Services the right to start a support action. Applicants who feared for their safety if they started a support action no longer had any fear because the department started it.

Paternity actions are another story. If the mother is uncooperative there is really nothing we can do. Even though we have the right to start a paternity action in court, prosecutors frown on this method. Under title IV-D, however, cooperation is mandated and I think we will have even more success.

QUESTION: What about the public relations implications within your own department? Do you believe that your workers are honestly committed to the sort of efforts you are making?

MR. BAILEY: My support specialists certainly feel that this is a worthwhile project, for

all we are trying to do is to shift the responsibility for support back to those legally liable and financially able to do so. I am sure there are many workers who think we are invading the client's privacy and should leave well enough alone. We've been told by some workers that we're persecuting people. How extensive this is I don't know. I would rather guess that this is not the norm, but the exception.

QUESTION: What about the role and the attitude of the Legislature? What plusses and minuses have legislators indicated to you regarding the program?

MR. BAILEY: Without the Legislature that we have, we never would be off the ground. Few people gave it a chance for success. We were only funded with half a million dollars of State funds and half a million Federal. It had immediate success, and as a result the Legislature asked us what legislation we needed to make it even better.

Once advised, they passed enabling legislation which gave us the tools. They passed such things as support certification—in other words, turning over child support in AFDC cases to the State, which the Federal law now, 5 years later, says we must do. I think Michigan has been very fortunate in having the Legislature we have.

QUESTION: Perhaps you can give me a profile of the typical, if there is such a thing, child support case in which you are involved.

MR. BAILEY: The absent parent for whom we search is overwhelmingly male. When we began operating 5 years ago we found ourselves looking mainly for fathers who had taken off and been absent for a long time. Now we are getting fathers who have been absent for a short time. It's my guess that any State just coming into this program will find itself facing a backlog of deserters who have been gone for a period of 3 or 4 years.

Contrary to public belief, we do not find the father skips the State in most cases. As a matter of fact, he will normally go to a larger county and attempt to get lost in the crowd and take advantage of better employment opportunities in that larger county. Our statistics show that we locate approximately 68 percent of those for whom we look within the first 30 to 45 days.

We locate for other States as well, and the new Federal legislation mandates better cooperation among the States. We have tried to cooperate with other States, and hopefully

with others cooperating with us our chances for increased collections will improve.

QUESTION: I understand that a lot of your work with other States in the child support collection area has fallen under what was known as URESA (Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act). Does title IV-D replace URESA?

MR. BAILEY: No. In fact, IV-D enhances URESA. One of the big problems with URESA has been that other States put a URESA case on the bottom of the pile when it came into their office. Now if they don't handle it within an appropriate period they face Federal penalties.

QUESTION: As long as we are touching on the subject of title IV-D, what do you see as the pros and cons of this legislation? Specifically, what impact is it going to have on States like Michigan that have been active in this area, and on other States that perhaps have gotten into child support more recently?

MR. BAILEY: It will have a positive impact by making it impossible for an absent parent to find haven in another State to circumvent paying a support obligation. It will be a nice feeling to know that you have full and complete cooperation from each and every other State. The positive social impact is that it will be a welcome relief to the taxpayer to have all States working to shift responsibility for the

support of minor children back to those legally liable and financially able to do so.

QUESTION: Title IV-D provides incentives to local governments for participating in child support efforts. What do you believe will be the impact of these financial incentives?

MR. BAILEY: I think the incentives to the political subdivisions will enable the various county governing bodies, in Michigan the Boards of Commissioners, to update equipment for friends of the court and prosecutors and to increase their staffs to the size that they probably already should be. I know the intent of Congress was to see that these things were done, and I'm sure the Boards of Commissioners will not spend the money they get for paving airports and doing things not at all germaine to child support.

QUESTION: Have economic conditions during the past couple years had an impact on collections of child support? Are you facing a situation in which many fathers are simply unable to meet these obligations?

MR. BAILEY: No. As a matter of fact, we are running at the rate of $6 million ahead of last year.

QUESTION: What do you think accounts for this?

MR. BAILEY: The friends of the court are, I believe, using a different approach. It has taken more manhours, and more work in the field rather than in the office. This is not conjecture, this is what the friends of the court themselves told us when we wondered why collections were not dropping.

QUESTION: By work in the field you mean. . .?

MR. BAILEY: Enforcement.

QUESTION: This involves going out and talking to the parent. . . ?

MR. BAILEY: And actually making a collection.

QUESTION: You mention that you have been a member of a committee helping write regulations for title IV-D. Some of the latest

news accounts that I have seen indicate that there has been a delay in the participation of the Federal Government in IV-D. What is the latest picture?

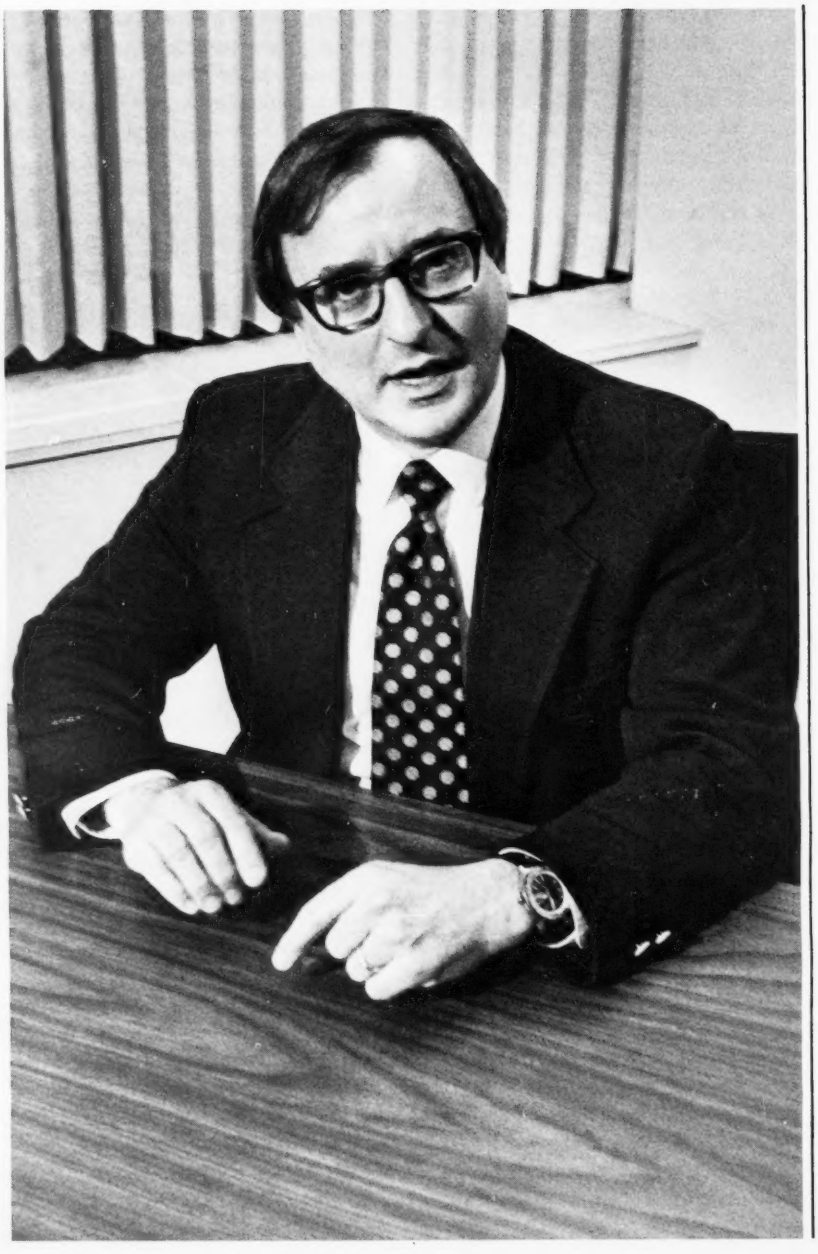
MR. BAILEY: With one exception, there has been no delay in participation by the Federal Government that I am aware of. The one exception is the Federal Parent Locator Service and that should be corrected as soon as the HEW FY 1976 budget is approved by Congress.

The whole law was delayed from July 1 to August 1 by the Congress and on August 9 there were some further amendments, but the Federal law is now in effect and it's operative in Michigan and has been. As a matter of fact, we had it in operation on July 1 in most respects.

QUESTION: Aside from, or perhaps in conjunction with title IV-D, what about the future of Michigan's program?

MR. BAILEY: We are by far going to have the most well-trained support specialists of any State. Within the next few months we hope to set up a training session to make sure we have some uniform techniques and hopefully within the next year we'll have some regional support seminars where we combine the friend of the court, prosecutors, and support specialists from a particular area of the State under one roof for maybe a 1 or 2-day seminar.

I think training is essential, and I think that getting acquainted with each other is just as essential, and I don't mean only the top people in the offices. I mean the entire staff, so that there's a comfortable feeling in talking and dealing with each other. We are on the same team and want to engender that same feeling throughout the State.



Research and Demonstrations

Reports may be obtained from the grantee or contractor.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF DISABILITY FROM EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF PUERTO RICAN YOUTHS (RD–2969–G–69). Social Structures, Ideologies, and Culture Codes in Occupational Development of Puerto Rican Youths, Volume I of Final Report; Computer Assisted Processing of Ethnographic Data, Volume II, Part I of Final Report; Event Analysis as a Methodology for Urban Anthropology, Volume II, Part II of Final Report. Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. 61801.

CLIENT SOCIAL CLASS IDENTIFICATION IN THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROCESS (RD–1591). Vocational Guidance and Rehabilitation Services, 2239 E. 55th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

CASE FINDING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY SYSTEM OF SERVICES FOR MODEL CITIES RESIDENTS WITH HEARING DISABILITIES (14–P–55249/7–01). Greater Kansas City Hearing and Speech Center, Kansas City General Hospital and Medical Center, 24th and Cherry, Kansas City, Mo. 64108.

CHANGES RESULTING FROM SEPARATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM SOCIAL SERVICES IN JERUSALEM (19–P–58058–F–01). School of Social Work, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel. The major action goal was the separation of public assistance and social services in Jerusalem's Municipal Welfare Agency. The major research goal was to study the effects of this separation on manpower utilization and worker time on the Agency's ability to capture relevant program information necessary for planning and evaluation, and on changes in service delivery.

MONTANA'S RURAL SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM (11–P–57183/8-03). Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, P.O. Box 1723, Helena, Mont. 59601. Project objectives were to obtain basic information about problems and service needs in a sparsely settled rural area, develop services needed to meet the needs and assure their accessibility, and consolidate and coordinate the delivery of State services with other public and voluntary services.

A MODEL FOR A RURAL HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM IN A DISTRESSED AREA OF NEW MEXICO (11–P–57220/6–04). New Mexico Health and Social Services Department, P.O. Box 2384, Santa Fe, N. Mex. 87501. Objectives of the research were to develop and operate a comprehensive ambulatory health care system emphasizing early screening, detection, and prevention, and including diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and follow-up services for a rural area of northwestern New Mexico; to improve the health status of the people of the Cuba Checkerboard area; and to obtain the financial resources to develop and maintain the Checkerboard Area Health System.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM FOR THE REHABILITATION OF INJURED WORKERS EMPLOYED IN BLACK METALLURGY AND METAL INDUSTRY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (19–P–58401). Copies are available from SRS' Division of Support Services, Room 3431–Switzer Bldg.

EFFECTIVE REPORT WRITING IN VOCATIONAL EVALUATION AND WORK ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS (12–P–55307/5). Materials Development Center, Department of Rehabilitation and Manpower Services, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wis. 54751.

SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE. (An annotated listing of all SRS International research and demonstration projects approved from 1961–1974 under the Agricultural Trade, Development and Assistance Act, as amended P.L. 480. Available from SRS, Room 4048-Switzer Bldg.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WELFARE RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION (09–P–56033/9–06). Regional Research Institute in Social Welfare, School of Social Work, University of Southern California, 3965 South Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90037.

IMPROVING THE MINNESOTA SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM (11–P–57266/5–01). Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Division of Social Services, Centennial Office Building, St. Paul, Minn. 55155. The basic objective was to create a free-standing social service delivery system upon which a computerized management information system could be designed and installed.

FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION PROJECTION TO 1980 (18–P–57755/3–01). The Research Center, National Planning Association, 1666 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. This report summarizes the technical aspects of preparing projections of family income distributions to 1980.

COORDINATING THE WELFARE AND REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR DISABLED PA RECIPIENTS (11–P–57204/5–03). Michigan Department of Social Services, 300 S. Capitol, Lansing, Mich. 48926. This project explored the full rehabilitation potential of severely disabled public assistance recipients in Michigan and developed a workable model for delivering extensive vocational rehabilitation services and intensive social support services in an integrated fashion.

NATIONAL SERVICE REFORM PROJECT (11–P–57301/4–02). Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Community Services, State Office Building, 47 Trinity Ave., S.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30334. Objectives were to define and develop (1) a goal-oriented social service delivery system; (2) an information system which would reflect the delivery system and provide a data base to meet uniform Federal reporting requirements and also be responsive to State level needs; (3) a cost information system which would, in conjunction with the service information system, provide for the measurement of program and cost effectiveness of specific services provided; and (4) a monitoring and evaluation system.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SERVICES (11–P–57311/8–03). Colorado Department of Social Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, Colo. 80203. The final report is in five volumes under the major title, *Social Service Information System:* (1) System Description Manual, (2) Management Overview Manual, (3) Editor/Monitor and Data Entry Manual, (4) Data Control Manual, and (5) Reference Manual.

Clients Sound Off

BEA CHAPMAN

One of the ironies of our time seems to be the contradictions in the field of communications. While we have more devices, more machinery, more endeavors, and more awareness, we seem to be muddling along with failure compounded by more failure to reach people with vital information. In fact the maze has grown into a virtual spiderweb of such specialization as to cast the unwary "client" into a system of revolving doors.

With this problem in mind, the Maine Department of Health and Welfare in 1969 tried a different approach. As public relations director, I went to the then-Commissioner, Dr. Dean Fisher, and suggested that health and welfare clients be *invited* to write to the Department about *anything* either bothering or pleasing them.

I said: "We spend a lot of time and money sending out stiffly worded letters about new programs. We get little response from the Department's usual mundane newsletter written chiefly for staff who seldom read it or contribute to it. So let's do something different. Let the people for whom *we* exist talk to *us*, for a change."

The Commissioner was intrigued with the idea and approved a very warmly written notice to go in with the next pay checks. It was headlined simply, "Tell Us About You!"

The mail poured in like a flood—pathos upon pathos, much of which showed the horrendous gaps in our own information efforts. Also a goodly number of grateful letters telling of benefits received. It was a most interesting mixed bag of response.

Intended originally as a one-time shot into the darkened area of which we were quite unaware, the letters inspired a special tabloid publication entitled simply: LETTERS FROM YOU. The colorful blue cover was sprinkled all over with a montage of handwriting from the letters and a star in the center of the issue said:

"We should be aware that our wonderful United States of America will never be stronger than the weakest citizen within it, never richer than the poorest, never more cultured than the least literate, never morally stronger than the most immoral, never more loved than the most hate-filled citizen is capable of loving it. . . ."

The gems of philosophy we received in the mail were treasures. This one, for instance, from a family of six: "We hope you read from our letter that we are making it quite well even in spite of our financial condition and that we will keep poverty from becoming a state of mind which is to us the real thing to fear."

Needs were expressed, such as this item: "I am handicapped, live in a small apartment must pay $5 for someone to take me to the doctor.

"Even single and with no family my expenses are more than I receive. Thank you for taking all this into consideration and helping us."

Then there was this view: "You folks help me by your caseworker taking my $28 a month and medicare away from me when I was helpless to work.!!"

As if we had struck gold, a consultation with the Commissioner brought the approval to throw out the old newsletter and design a new one based on the clues we had received from clients. It was a mammoth idea even in Maine where our volume nowhere matches that of big cities.

We thought about a name, the word CONCERN kept reoccuring. Isn't that what we are really all about in the human service field? The tabloid format was kept, on newsprint, with a different color. We decided four issues a year would serve our purpose.

At first the "bureaus" were somewhat cool to the unorthodox idea. But gradually staff said they learned more through CONCERN than they sometimes got through administrative channels. The format became a two-way conversation with clients.

To assure that all programs in the Department are covered (Maine's Department of Health and Welfare is an umbrella agency) the Editorial Board is made up of 15–20 people who represent each of the six bureaus. Each representative is responsible for articles from his bureau. This spreads the work load and helps keep the editor, a publicity representative in the Office of Information and Education, in touch with personnel and programs within the entire Department.

CONCERN has had national mention on many occasions and nearly

every State and county within States have written for samples and details about its origin, effectiveness, and production.

After 6 years, CONCERN is still a viable means of contact between the too often frenzied recipient and the Department. The August issue was sent to 46,000 Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Supplemental Security Income recipients on the Food Stamp program. An additional 3,000 copies were sent to agencies, Department staff, regional offices, and interested citizens who ask to be on the mailing list. The theme? Food. An attempt was made to inform the recipients of every food-related service available to them.

There are, however, still problems in distribution with many being returned due to computer foul-ups. It was easier to distribute before the State got locked into SSI, and other cross-indexed computer programs. It seems there is no single ideal way of informing clients about anything. For instance, recently I had occasion to find help for a 93-year-old woman on assistance. She found it necessary to move into a more expensive apartment and needed rent supplement. Six different local agencies referred the call to other agencies, and not one offered the rent refund form we needed. We finally got it through our Congressman's office.

Bea Chapman is former director, Office of Information and Education, Maine Department of Health and Welfare.

CONCERN

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330

Spring of 1975

PRODUCED BY THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION & EDUCATION

Postmaster: if not delivered do not return

PLEASE SHOW YOUR CONCERN—
PASS ALONG TO A FRIEND.

Printed Under Appropriation No 1410-2180

CHILDREN—
OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The world of tomorrow rests in the hands of the precious creatures we call children. They bring renewed life, enthusiasm, and a new spirit of adventure and fun to the world of today.

For a child to grow into a productive adult they must be fed, sheltered, loved and protected. These basic needs are usually met by parents or family. The child's welfare is so important that if their needs are not met by parents, the Maine Department of Health and Welfare assumes this role.

This Spring issue of CONCERN features some of the services for children especially developed to help meet children's needs. Medical services to families not receiving financial aid from the state and protection for ALL children are two that you may want to give special attention.

Our children (and the world) have a better chance for survival if they are healthy, well nourished and secure. Our commitment to them is large. We must accept responsibility for the way to furnish these needs.

How Effective Are Social Services?

DAVID EPPLEY

While several long term evaluation efforts to measure effectiveness of social services are underway, they are not expected to produce any usable data for some time. With this in mind, the Social and Rehabilitation Service contracted with Pacific Training and Technical Assistance Corporation of Berkeley, Calif., for an exploratory, short term evaluation of the effectiveness of a wide array of social service programs. The major objective was to provide information quickly on the achievement of program goals.

A number of States had information systems at the time of the PTTA study which made use of generic measurement concepts. (''Generic measurement'' in this context refers to technology appropriate for evaluation of effectiveness of an array of different types of social services or service mixes and not measurement specific to a particular service.) The initial phase of the evaluation effort included a survey to determine which States, if any, had accessible and usable data. The study was exploratory and was expected to produce only data that might improve decisions in the area of social services, recognizing that the findings would represent only a single input to the decisionmaking process.

Study methods

PTTA first reviewed various generic measurement systems pertaining to goal attainment or goal maintenance in operation at the time of the study, to determine if it was feasible to collect data of sufficient uniformity in their definitions of services, service goals, and other aspects of the study. The study objectives discovered to be attainable, a decision was made to go ahead with the study at six sites. (One of the sites was subsequently dropped from the study.)

The major methodological tasks of the project were to determine the basic unit of study, to define the data elements to be included in a common data model, to structure the data from the sites into common classification, and to aggregate the data from the five study sites. The basic unit of study was defined as an ''episode,'' consisting of a goal, a service or services directed toward the achievement of that goal, and the outcome of the services. The goals defined in title XX and the actual site goals in use at the time of the project were reconciled into four major goals:

- Self-support
- Self-sufficiency
- Substitute care
- Protection

The goals of substitute care and protection were derived goals for the purpose of achieving a common goal

structure for all five sites. The goals were derived on the basis of information in the data records at those sites which did not define them explicitly.

On the basis of a reconciliation of the services actually in use at the sites and those defined in the Social Services Reporting Requirements, services were structured into 20 service categories. Multiple service categories were classified as "pairs," "triplets," and "quadruplets," based on the number of multiple services delivered in the course of a single episode.

Goal achievement ratings, based on site-specific achievement or termination codes, provided the basis for measurement of effectiveness of services. The "achievement rate" was defined as the percentage of episodes in which the outcomes were specifically identified as "goal achieved." The five sites included in the study were Montana, Maine, Iowa, Georgia, and Utah. The findings discussed in this article are based on aggregated statewide data from these five States covering more than 200,000 episodes.

Limitations

Some major limitations of the study:

■ The meaning of "goal achievement" is ambiguous and, as used operationally in the study, could mean any step on a ladder of goals and subgoals in the mind of the caseworker making the subjective judgment. For example, achievement of the goal of self-support could mean anything from fully employed and no longer receiving assistance to merely job-ready but still drawing assistance payments. As a result of this lack of uniformity of meaning, the definition of effectiveness of services as measured by past achievement varies to some extent from site to site and from worker to worker.

■ Restructuring of goals and services to fit into a common data model after the fact resulted in some logical inconsistencies between the goals and the services delivered to achieve them. For example, adoption services were frequently identified for the goal of self-support and protective services were sometimes identified for goals other than protection. Anomalies of this kind make interpretation of the relationship between services and service goals uncertain.

■ There are differences among and within the sites with respect to episode length and number of episodes per client. As a result, the meaning of effectiveness differentials with respect to the variables included in the study is not always clear. Failure to control length of episodes and number of episodes per client, may mean that some of the variations in effectiveness of services thought to be associated with a particular variable may in fact reflect differences in these uncontrolled factors.

■ There are wide variations in outcome findings among the various sites. As a result, one wonders whether the sites were actually measuring the same phenomena. Consistency among the sites in the study findings would have added greater confidence in the validity and reliability of the data.

■ There are quantitative and qualitative differences in the service components of episodes. A given service in one episode may include different kinds of activities and/or more service than the "same" service in another episode. The quantity and quality of services, not being identified or controlled in the study, some of the differences in effectiveness associated with a given variable may, in fact, be attributable to differences in quantity or quality of services provided.

■ Failure to control for problem magnitude has resulted in uncertainty of interpretation of some of the data. For example, effectiveness of multiple services was found to be inversely related to the number of services contained within a given service mix. To interpret these findings adequately, one would need to know if the number and severity of problems in multiple service cases is the underlying factor involved, or if the explanation lies elsewhere.

■ Large urban centers are underrepresented. While the primary aim of the study was to penetrate into various relationships rather than to generalize to a larger population, one needs to be mindful of the tendency toward rural bias.

Findings and implications

The major findings of the study:

■ The caseworkers participating in the study perceived the goals as being achieved in 49 percent of all episodes.

■ Of the high frequency services, those that were perceived as relatively more effective were adoption services, protective services, health-related services, and employment/training services.

■ Foster care services and family planning services were considered relatively less effective among the high frequency services.

■ Achievement of goals of multiple services is inversely related to the number of service categories contained within the service mix and the achievement rate for all service mixes is below the rate for individual services.

■ Among the four goals included in the study (self-support, self-sufficiency, protection, and substitute care) the protection goal has the highest achievement rate (55 percent) and the self-support goal the lowest (45 percent).

■ For the goal of self-support, employment/training services are relatively more effective than other services.

■ For the goal of self-sufficiency, health-related services are strongly dominant and relatively less effective than other services.

■ Protective services are strongly dominant in relation to the goal of protection and they are effective.

■ Service outcomes vary by program title, i.e., IV-A, IV-B, and VI.

■ In general, services are relatively more effective for white clients than for black clients.

Because of the limitations of the study that have previously been outlined, the data may be used only as a rough guide for identification of possible trouble spots for further investigation. Decisions on allocation of resources should not be based on the study findings. However, identification of future research needs is a valid purpose of research and evaluation studies and the PTTA study brings into sharp relief the need for methodological development and additional research in a number of important areas.

It was indicated earlier that the goal of protection was associated with the highest achievement rate and self-support the lowest. While one should not consider these rates as hard and fast, it seems clear that the caseworkers in this study viewed the goal of protection as having been attained relatively more frequently than the other three goals. The goal of self-support was perceived as having been achieved relatively less frequently. The workers also judged protective services, adoption services, health-related services, and employment/training services to be the most effective in achieving major program goals, while foster care services and family planning services were determined to be relatively ineffective in achieving their goals.

While these results, standing alone, are obviously not sufficiently persuading to justify decisions to do away with some services and expand others, States can determine whether their experiences are congruent with the PTTA study results. If so, States can probe further into the underlying causes and take corrective actions where indicated.

Based on the perceptions of the caseworkers of the relative effectiveness of multiple services *vis-a-vis* individual services, the achievement rate for service mixes was found to be below the rate for individual services and the achievement rate for service mixes was found to be inversely related to the number of services in the service mix. These findings are not consistent with expectations and there is need for research into the underlying causes using problem magnitude, characteristics of clients, and type of service intervention as test factors.

It has been stated that in general services tended to achieve their goals with greater frequency for whites than for blacks. The explanation for this lies either in the greater severity of problems of blacks or in differential service delivery to blacks. It is important to find out which explanation is correct. Further investigation and validation is therefore necessary.

Institutionalization was found to be a very infrequent goal at the sites studied. Institutional care was specified as a goal at only two of the sites and these sites assigned fewer than 1 percent of the cases to this goal.

Further research is needed to determine whether States are adequately recognizing institutional care as a program.

PTTA study and title XX

It is clear that the PTTA study will not provide conclusive answers concerning effectiveness of social services, nor was it ever intended to. Whatever answers are provided beget more questions, and this is typical of most research and evaluation.

A major question relates to where we are with respect to evaluation of social services and where we should be going. The implications of the PTTA study in relation to the overall evaluation strategy for title XX seem to be these:

■ Section 2006 (a) requires that the Secretary provide for the continuing evaluation of State social service programs and evaluation reports must be provided annually under 2006 (c). It is expected that the following types of information will be required to satisfy this provision:

(1) The effect of title XX on State resource allocations and on State methods of delivery of services. (What services planned and actual were provided to whom at what cost? What services were provided directly, purchased, or otherwise arranged for?)

(2) Information for evaluation of the planning process.

(3) Information on the effect of fee payments.

(4) Information on effectiveness and cost effectiveness of title XX.

(5) Net impact evaluation.

The probable sources for the above information are the Social Services Reporting Requirements; a client-based report and a possible comparison group; and a process evaluation to be conducted by contract with Regional Office participation.

■ Section 4 requires a report to Congress by July 1, 1977, on effectiveness of the title XX program and recommendations for change. It is expected that the same sources for the section 2006 reports will be used for the section 4 report. The focus for the section 4 report will be on the title XX process and on descriptive statistics.

■ Section 2002 (a) (9) (b) requires that the Secretary make a report to Congress by July 1, 1977, on the appropriateness of imposing the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements on title XX day care, and recommendations for changing the FIDCR requirements. The type of information required to satisfy this requirement is as yet not fully defined. Some of the necessary data are expected to be obtained by private contract and a compliance report is expected to be designed in HEW.

■ Section 2006 (b) requires that the Secretary make available to the States technical assistance in the area of evaluation, as well as in other areas. Annual reporting of technical assistance given to the States is required. This technical assistance will help the States to improve their capabilities for evaluating the programs for which they are responsible and help the States to meet Federal reporting requirements. To fulfill these requirements, the Federal Government will need to develop methodologies for State and Federal evaluation. A manual on evaluation of effectiveness of services may be one type of technical assistance in this area. In addition, technical assistance should help the States develop and upgrade State and local data bases for complying with State and Federal evaluation needs.

The PTTA study is relevant to these technical assistance needs as well as to the continuing evaluation contemplated under section 2006 and the section 4 report. If necessary modifications are made to the PTTA methodology, the study could help in the interim while evaluation systems and data bases are being put in place. It may be several years before full-blown technologies produce acceptable data on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of services. Efforts to develop uniform data elements in a client-based evaluation system and efforts to develop descriptive statistics should go forward concurrently with efforts to develop interim methods and collect data on effectiveness of services. States now have an urgent need for technical assistance in making current evaluations of their service programs, in making resource allocation decisions, and in improving service delivery. Early national evaluations using such methods would also be useful for Federal purposes.

Suggested interim approach

There are a number of methodological lessons to be learned from the PTTA study:

■ Methods which aggregate data that are restructured into a common data model after the fact are to be avoided.

■ Until the title XX goals are fully congruent with the real world of what caseworkers actually do in providing social services, goal models for evaluating effectiveness of services will not be meaningful.

■ Appropriate control variables need to be included in evaluations so that interpretation and analysis of the data are not distorted. For example, the following variables should be controlled: characteristics of clients; characteristics of communities; episode length; number of episodes per client; components of services; and severity of client problems.

Briefly, the interim approach suggested here is that teams of evaluators, hopefully without vested interest in the outcomes of service programs, conduct field evaluations at selected sites of selected services, using empirical data on accomplishments of services. The source of the data would be currently existing case records and interviews with caseworkers and selected clients. The evaluations would focus on what has actually been achieved by the services in terms of what changes the services made in the lives of people. No attempt would be made to relate such achievement to the title XX goals until such time as the States had in place evaluation systems with integrated services, goals, and other relevant data elements.

The teams would consist of Central and Regional Office staff or, if sufficient evaluation funds were available, private contractor staff. The types of data required for the suggested evaluation should be available from currently existing case records. Case records will be in a state of transition while new client-based records are being developed and implemented. However, changes in the content of the records would be expected to add to, rather than detract from their utility for evaluation purposes. The outcomes of the services would be classified empirically and not forced into preconceived conceptual models. Site studies of the type suggested would aggregate data on selected services, such as protective services and family planning services, across sites only if the data proved sufficiently uniform to permit such aggregation. Otherwise, evidence on effectiveness of services would be built up on the basis of the unique studies at the individual sites.

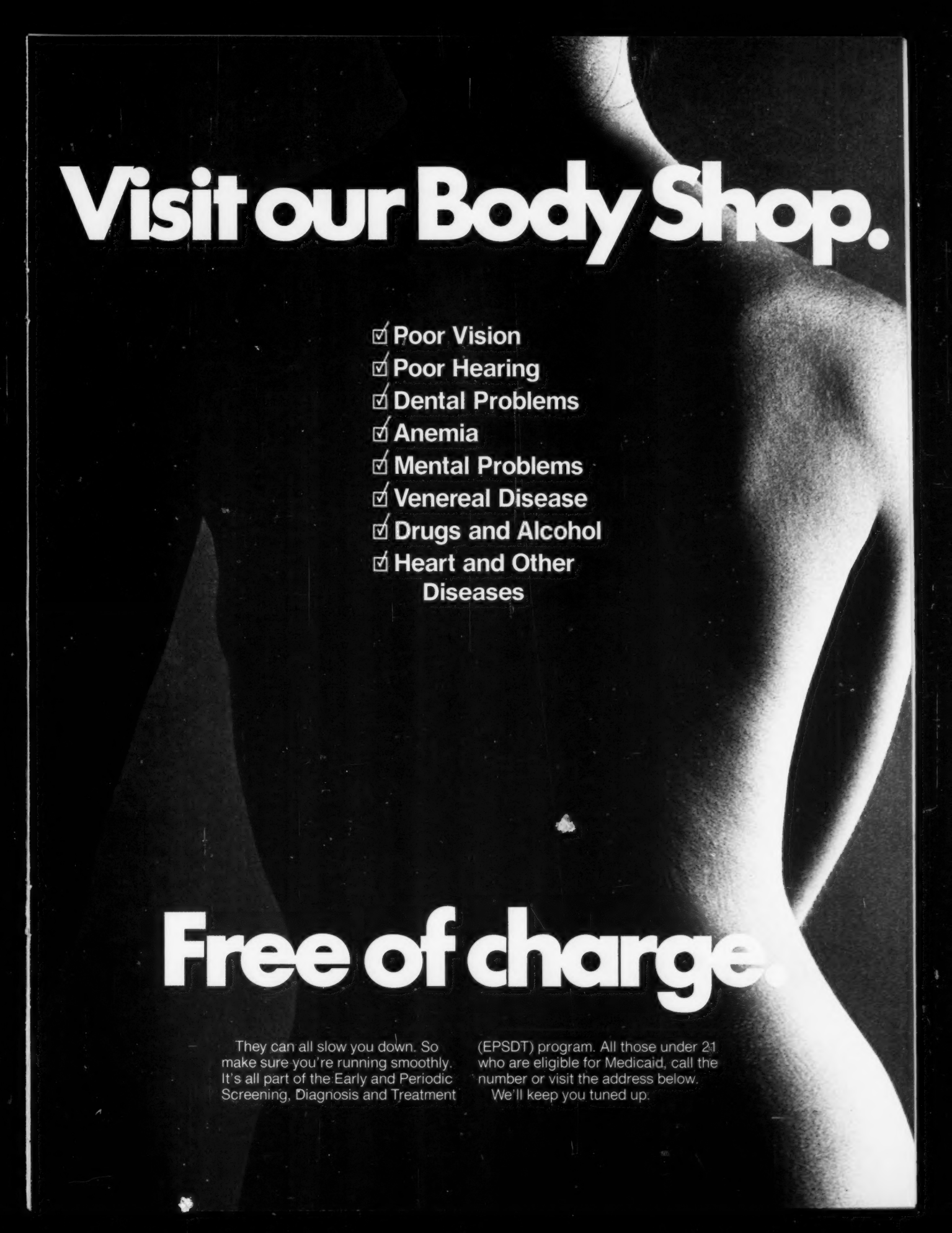
The data collected in the field evaluations would include control variables such as characteristics of clients (age, sex, size of family, etc.); characteristics of the communities (type of labor market environment, for example); episode length and number of episodes per client; units of service; and severity of problems.

The development of the methodology and the data collection effort should, hopefully, produce early information on the effectiveness of social services for State and Federal use, and would produce a methodology which States could adapt for use in their current evaluations. Following are some suggested data elements to be included:

■ Client I.D.
■ Case status (open or closed)
■ Age of primary client
■ Sex of primary client
■ Size of family
■ Client problem(s)
■ Severity of client problem(s)
■ Characteristics of place of residence (labor market conditions, size of population, etc.)
■ Length of service episode (days)
■ Number of episodes for client during specified period
■ Type of service(s) provided
■ Units of service provided
■ Method of providing services (direct, purchased, other)
■ Outcome of service: (for example) client became job ready, client entered employment, client earns wage permitting unsubsidized self-support, client enabled to remain in own home, client enabled to return to own home, client enabled to live in institution, repetition of child abuse/neglect prevented, severity of child abuse/neglect reduced, unwanted births prevented, and client helped to utilize family planning services.

The ideal situation would find the necessary information clearly spelled out in the service plan and/or the case record. If, however, such were not the case, the knowledge of the agency staff (caseworkers or supervisors) could be utilized. Where deemed appropriate, data on outcomes could be checked by telephone or face-to-face interview with clients. Data on characteristics of the community would be obtained from community documents and/or community experts.

Mr. Eppley is acting chief, Evaluation Branch, Community Services Administration, SRS.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New York State to try automated welfare management

The New York Department of Social Services (NYDSS) has received legislative approval for the development of a Welfare Management System and a Medicaid Management Information System.

The State's primary objective is to provide a reliable centralized method to improve the management of welfare programs and to prevent invalid or inappropriate expenditures of welfare funds.

Approximately $4.4 million of State/Federal funds are expected to be spent in 1975 on these two efforts alone. That amount is exclusive of obtaining automated data processing equipment, but it does include developing specifications for competitive acquisition of ADP equipment to provide centralized processing.

The State established an interdepartmental committee to provide overall direction and monitor the total effort. Members of the committee include department heads, deputies, senior executives from the Governor's office and the Regional Office.

Nursing home operator found guilty of Medicaid fraud

A Massachusetts' nursing home operator has been convicted of fraud in connection with Medicaid payments.

William J. Gerveny, owner of four nursing homes, was found guilty in a jury trial of collecting $23,000 in unjustified reimbursements on the basis of false financial reports filed with the State Rate Setting Commission. Gerveny received 12- to 15-year concurrent terms for perjury counts, to be followed by 18-months concurrent terms for the attempted larceny.

The prosecution alleged that Gerveny tried to manipulate at least $49,000 in addition to the $23,000 overpayment.

Food service improved through use of computers

Computers are being used by the Pennsylvania State Welfare Department to monitor the food served to patients and residents in its 50 institutions, Welfare Secretary Frank S. Beal announced.

Use of the modern management system, in addition to providing better meals, will help to hold down the spiraling cost of food for institutions which increased by 37 percent last year.

"We will continue our efforts to provide the best possible meals at the lowest cost through a new Master Cycle Menu System being implemented on a pilot basis in the 13 institutions of the Central Region," Secretary Beal said.

From the computer system, the Department has already increased its knowledge of the food serving habits of the institutions and has been able to improve the quality of meals served patients and residents.

Computers will be used to evaluate the Cycle Menu System and will provide standard recipes on a 5 week cycle. This will help to reduce the waste of food and also supply necessary data for projecting food supply needs.

Also, through centralized purchasing and warehousing additional savings can be effected. Knowledge will be gained on actual food requirements thereby providing factual data for the regulation and utilization of institutional farm production.

In addition to a 5-week standard menu cycle, the system will also provide menus and recipes for the most widely used therapeutic diets. It will also provide special menus for special holiday meals.

Under a plan for evaluation of the system, monthly menu reviews will be made to determine acceptability of menu items by a charting of plate waste. A review team will then replace items or add a selective item for food not acceptable to certain segments of the institutional population.

Montana reinstates medically needy

The Montana Legislature, in special session, passed a resolution directing the Administrator of Montana's Social and Rehabilitation Services to reinstate coverage of the medically needy.

Elimination of the medically needy was initially scheduled for July 1, 1975, but was delayed by a court injunction.

Michigan study suggests State assume GA program

A Michigan Department of Social Services study suggests that the State should assume responsibility for General Assistance programs currently handled by the counties.

According to the study General Assistance, which provides financial aid mainly to single persons and childless couples who do not qualify for other programs, varies considerably from county to county.

"If an effort is to be made to improve the Michigan GA program, it is recommended that . . . GA should be controlled more by the State to correspond to the State's fiscal liability," the study says.

Although all policymaking authority for GA rests with the 83 county social services boards, General Assistance costs have increasingly been borne by the State.

In addition to the State's increasing financial stake in the program, the study presents some additional arguments in favor of State takeover:

1. GA is inequitable and inadequate. Inequities exist in two ways: among counties' GA standards and between GA as a whole and State categorical assistance.

2. The administration of GA is complicated because policymaking authority is divided between the State Department of Social Services and local county social services boards.

3. For many people, GA is not a "stop gap" measure, but rather, the only income many have for a year or longer.

Pa. social services contractors must recruit PA eligibles

To expand its efforts toward helping persons on public assistance obtain jobs, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare will require contractors for social service programs to provide job opportunities for persons on assistance and those potentially eligible

Welfare Secretary Frank S. Beal said, effective immediately, all contracts for social services will require that the contractor make every possible effort to recruit and provide job training for such persons.

"Too often, assistance clients have been viewed as unwilling to work when the fact is they have not been given an opportunity to get a job. In many cases, they have not had the educational opportunity necessary for them to compete effectively in the job market," Beal said.

"We have found through our Commonwealth Careers Program that, with appropriate job training, persons who were once dependent on assistance can become economically self-supporting. And we have found that their performance on the job equals that of other candidates for positions."

Beal noted that all new social service contracts will contain a provision insuring that a portion of the jobs resulting from the contracts will be made available to persons on assistance or those who are considered potentially eligible for assistance.

The Department will require contractors to submit periodic reports of their performance under the new provision, and those reports will be evaluated and considered when the contracts are up for renewal.

Social service contracts involve programs such as day care, homemaker services, family planning, foster home care, home delivered meals and group dining programs, legal services, protective care for children and adults, socialization and recreation and transportation.

Nine communities chosen for project

Nine communities across the country have been selected by the National Council for Homemaker-Home Aide Services to participate in the first phase of a national advocacy program.

The goal of the program is to establish or expand in-home health and social services as alternatives to institutional or foster care for children, the ill or disabled and the elderly.

S. Sterling McMillan, professor emeritus, Case Western Reserve, Cleveland, is chairman of the project's national advisory committee. He announced that Athens, Ga., Sunnyside, Queens, N.Y., Delaware, Ohio, Los Angeles, St. Bernard Parish, La., Watertown, N.Y., Tulsa, Okla., Anderson County, Tenn. and Benton and Linn Counties, Ore. have been chosen as the demonstration communities. "In mid-1976," he said, "the actions taken in each of the nine communities will be evaluated to see how they can be improved or duplicated in approximately 25 additional communities each year over the next several years."

The first phase of the project is being underwritten by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to develop a model for volunteer action, largely by older persons, at the community level. Trained volunteer advocates will encourage their communities to develop or expand homemaker-home health aide and other supportive services, such as home-delivered meals, telephone reassurance programs and escort service. Advocates, selected locally, have attended briefing sessions conducted by the National Council in New York.

The national advisory committee includes representatives of the American Association of Retired Persons/ National Retired Teachers Association, United Way of America, National Council on the Aging, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Woman's Auxiliary of the American Medical Association, National Council of Jewish Women, Association of the Junior Leagues, representatives of community homemaker-home health aide programs and several departments of the Federal Government.

Child Neglect

Color Me Grey

DOROTHY SUTHERLAND

This is Part I of a two part article. Part II will appear in the October 1975 issue.

Child Neglect is a familiar phenomenon to social services and public health workers who see it in varying degrees in their day-to-day contacts with clients. The national dimensions of the problem, however, are not always apparent to the trained professional—even less so to the concerned citizen.

Dr. Norman A. Polansky, professor of social work and sociology, University of Georgia, says "We should not be surprised to find a million children neglected in this country at any one time. . ." [1]

One might, on the contrary, be surprised that the estimate is not higher. For instance, Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber, executive director of Odyssey House, Inc., (an organization originally concerned with children on drugs), told the Congress in October that at least 4 million children were "in dire need" of government protective services. Of course, Dr. Densen-Gerber's figure included not only neglect but also severe abuse and maltreatment of all kinds. But Dr. Polansky says that when the statistics are analyzed (and those available are incomplete at best) neglect is found to be far more prevalent than abuse. The ratio of neglect to abuse, depending upon what State or what study one evaluates, may range from 3:1 to 10:1 or higher.

Child neglect is a severe social problem with many grey areas, hard to define precisely, or treat successfully, still more difficult to prevent.

Unlike child abuse, neglect is less frequently reported and often surfaces only as the result of keen observation of skillful client relationships on the part of social and public health workers. Neglect has been less researched than abuse and fewer action programs have been developed specifically to deal with its causes and consequences.

Dr. Polansky is one of a handful of investigators who believe child neglect is a category worthy of study on its own. His "Child Neglect in a Rural Community," 1968, was a pilot study in Appalachia of the inadequate mother, and was designed to advance workable formulas for later large scale studies. One of the most significant of these (with which RECORD readers may already be familiar) was a study of "The Apathy-Futility Syndrome in Child Neglect," funded by an SRS project grant. It involved 65 mother-child pairs recruited from a year-round Head Start program in a mountain county in North Carolina and focused on diagnosing major causes of marginal and/or neglectful child caring, and especially on how relevant the apathy-futility syndrome among mothers was to the quality of care. An ancillary investigation compared the types of child neglect which appeared critical to welfare workers and public health nurses employed in rural areas versus a group employed in metropolitan Atlanta.

Now Polansky is co-author with Carolyn Hally, a social worker, and Nancy F. Polansky, a psychiatric nurse, of "a state of knowledge" report on child neglect throughout the Nation. It is probably the first, if not the only, comprehensive survey of the literature and accomplishments, as well as needs, on child neglect separated (so far as possible) from child abuse or, as some investigators prefer to say, "maltreatment."

"Profile of Neglect" covers the most advanced thinking regarding causes, early signs, possible prevention, programs, methods of handling, service delivery systems, and potential consequences of failure to care properly for children in this country.

"Profile. . ." was financed by a $25,000 SRS-Community Services Administration project grant and was one of six (since 1973) SRS-funded investigations into problems of providing services to abused children, protective services needs, and other related subjects such as, for example, detecting early warning signals of potential child abuse or neglect. SRS also participated with the Office of Child Development in joint funding totaling $1.4 million for 11 county and local demonstration programs to aid victims of abuse and their families.

"Profile of Neglect" follows a Congressional mandate (Public Law 93–247, January 1974) ". . .to compile, analyze, and publish a summary annually of recently conducted and currently conducted research on child abuse and neglect; . . .(to) make a complete and full study and investigation of the national incidence of child abuse and neglect, including a determination of the extent to which incidents of child abuse and neglect are increasing in number or severity. . ." The Congress appropriated $25 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976 and the succeeding year, to carry out these and other provisions of what is known as the "Child Abuse and Treatment Act."

Please note that, although "abuse" and "neglect" are both spelled out in the details of performance required under the law, the word "neglect" was omitted from the title.

It may have been assumed that the two are so closely inter-related, so co-existent, that no differentiation is needed. That such is not the case has been clearly demonstrated by Polansky and others. There is ample evidence in "Profile of Neglect." Still, the tendency of principal chief investigators pursuing projects under P.L. 93–247 has been to emphasize or concentrate on abuse.

Abuse is a positive—something done *to* someone; it can usually be demonstrated by testimony to an act or by visible signs. It is, therefore, reasonably measurable.

Neglect, on the other hand, is a negative—something that was *not* done, a needed service or "thing" that was not provided. Often, the only determinant is the degree of omission. There might be visible evidence (if we really knew what we were looking for) such as, for example, inadequate clothing, untreated disease, or parent-approved truancy. We might even have witnesses, persons perhaps who reported alleged neglect to a social worker or to the police. But the determination of neglect is never simple or clearcut; the issue is clouded by many attenuating circumstances, as Polansky shows us, and is, therefore, exceedingly difficult to measure.

For example, when is the condition of the child the result of intentional disinterest and uncaring. . .and when is it simply a traditional low-quality life style? Is the latter of equal concern with the former? What action can the social services agency take? At what point does society step in. . .or has the community any right to do so? When is it a matter for the courts?

I recall a visit with a public health nurse to a mountain family in southern Tennessee. When we got to the shanty at the end of a roughly hacked-out "road," we found the yard littered with garbage, trash, and animal and human excreta. Mangy dogs and cats scratched and sprawled in the sun and skinny chickens picked around in the confusion of weeds, broken toys and discarded furniture.

Soon, up from "the crick in the holler," trailed a grotesque procession: father with shotgun in hand, mother carrying a naked infant, and three other children wearing short pullover shirts and nothing else.

This family lived on squirrels and rabbits and an occasional scrawny chicken. Now and again the father cut wood for town folk and this earned him a few dollars which were spent on canned goods, beer and soft drink, and a few grocery staples. No amount of careful talking and hinting by the public health nurse could persuade the mother that such a thing as an adequate diet was either needed or within the reach of her children, nor had she any interest in periodic health checkups.

The children did not go to school (a) because they didn't want to; and (b) because they were dirty and their hand-me-down "good" clothes were laughed at by the other children.

Periodically, the nurse and social worker would go out there, armed with 5-gallon cans of hot water and soap, and bathe the children and clean up the yard. They would bring decent clothing and get the promise that "next week" the children would surely be in school. Next week, chances were, the family would be found again in its usual slovenly state.

One time, the mother agreed to appear in court with the children. They were all fairly clean and behaved well. They said they were getting along fine up there on the land and swore that they only missed school when the bus failed to wait for them.

A bewildered judge remanded them to the care of the local agencies, remarking, "What good would it do to put the kids in another home, or to lock up the parents? They're not going to change, and they seem happy enough as they are. . ."

Here, surely, was a clear case of all-around neglect. But so far as I know, it is still being dealt with by the personal intervention of the social worker and public health nurse.

The courts have little confusion in dealing with *abuse* cases when actual abuse can be shown and witnessed. They are less definite about what role to take when neglect is alleged and witnessed. Chances are that "iffy" cases of child neglect can get no action in the court. Polansky says that that is sometimes for want of a firm legal definition of neglect, sometimes for political reasons ("Parents vote; minor children do not.") But all too often unresolved neglect cases are bounced back to the social services and other agencies (as in the example given) because they are quite honestly viewed as primarily social problems, not matters requiring legal action.

Whether or not courts are involved, however, it is beyond question that local agency personnel must bear a large portion of responsibility to detect and correct child neglect within their local jurisdictions.

The "state of knowledge" reported in "Profile of Neglect" should save hours of scanning the literature and serve as a useful aid in understanding the extent of the problem of child neglect as well as in evaluating what experiences of other agencies might best be adapted to the particular gaps in one's own agency programs.

What is neglect?

Polansky et al. cite at least a score of authorities who have wrestled with the problem of coming up with a firm definition of neglect. One of the difficulties is that of finding a way to verify that an "act of omission" was intentional. If intentional, the act perhaps has legal overtones; if not, it still poses the question of how to protect the child now and in the future.

Legislative and social definitions of neglect have much in common. However, the judges usually confine themselves to "matters of clear and present danger," the authors say, whereas social workers become concerned about "what the child's future will bring if nothing is done about the child's current circumstances," both physical and emotional.

Elements covering neglect commonly found in State statutes:

1. Inadequate physical care.
2. Absence of or inadequate medical care.
3. Cruel or abusive treatment.
4. Improper supervision.
5. Exploitation of the child's earning capacity.
6. Unlawfully keeping the child out of school.
7. Exposing the child to criminal or immoral influence that endangers his morals. (Meier, E.B., 1964)

Whereas most of these elements are familiar to and identifiable by case workers, item 5 is perhaps less visible. Such exploitation may occur under a variety of conditions. The authors, however, give as one illustration the plight of children in migratory labor camps. Here one finds children illegally at work in the fields, chopping cotton or picking tomatoes or else left locked in shacks all day. These have been called "the most neglected children of America," (Bennett, 1968). Reul (1974) has "dealt with the dreadful living circumstances to which many children of migrant workers have been exposed, and with the extent of their hunger." She also writes of the deprivation of many Indian children living on reservations.

A working definition of neglect

Asserting that a "working definition" of neglect is arguable—as definitions "always are"—on semantic and conceptual grounds, the authors offer their own working definition:

"Child neglect may be defined as a condition in which a caretaker responsible for the child either deliberately or by extraordinary inattentiveness permits the child to experience avoidable

present suffering and/or fails to provide one or more of the ingredients generally deemed essential for developing a person's physical, intellectual, and emotional capacities.''

According to Polansky, the caretaker may be a nonparental figure (e.g., a social agency or even a community); the neglect need not be limited to ''consciously motivated behaviour;'' and ''failure to alleviate avoidable suffering is deemed neglectful even if it leaves no certain, long term damage. . .'' As the definition is based only on what is known in each area, the concept is somewhat ambiguous, Polansky adds, but believes that the present state of knowledge will expand and improve, offering opportunity for something more specific.

Polansky also believes that the ''most relevant'' instrument available for rating neglect in the multiproblem family is his own ''Childhood Level of Living Scale'' (Polansky, Borgman, and DeSaix, 1972).

Childhood level of living

This scale was developed out of a concern for children receiving care thought to be marginal or outright neglectful, and is related to Polansky's work in Appalachia. It includes evaluation of basic physical care along with measures of cognitive-emotional behavior and was used originally with families existing at or near.the poverty line. With income thus held constant, the investigators were able to establish a number of meaningful relationships between the level of living score and, for example, personality traits of the mother—the parent on whom the study

of poor Appalachian families was focussed.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children workers have been able to use the CLL effectively. It may therefore be applicable for use by agencies searching for neglect-relationships such as, for example, do children in the most dilapidated housing get the least amount of attention to their needs for affection and stimulation—both important factors in their personal and social development.

The CLL was designed for children aged four or five but, says Polansky, "much of it is relatively independent of the child's age." He would like to see it applied to a broader age group and to a larger population.

(Polansky is currently funded by HEW's Office of Child Development to develop a replication, under urban conditions, of the earlier study of rural conditions.)

Prevalence and reporting

Neglect is something that happens in the family system.

It is "a chronic state, woefully private and (often) undetected until it becomes glaring or leads to some dramatic denouncement" (Polansky). Prevalence is its appropriate index but "the prevalence of neglect remains a mystery, with no reliable figures for the Nation as a whole." Polansky adds that figures on adjudicated neglect *have* to be "gross underestimates" and that reporting in general tends to be conservative.

In his own State of Georgia, where statistics are incomplete partly because of the State's reporting law (revised in 1974 but not yet reflected in the statistics), no reliable figures are available. But the State's consultant on protective services estimates that there are as many as 20,000 neglect cases. This would be a ratio of neglect to abuse of 50:1, as against Polansky's own nationwide estimate of 10:1.

Since 1971, "Profile of Neglect" reports, the State of Florida has had "perhaps the most advanced system in the country for the central reporting of abuse and neglect." Responsibility was transferred from the local juvenile courts to the State's Department of Health and Rehabilitation. A child abuse and neglect registry was set up in October of that year. A Wide Area Telephone System (WATS) was installed for receiving reports from anywhere in the State and has been manned around the clock 7 days a week. The program was backed up by a tasteful advertising campaign utilizing all media and stressing use of the central reporting service with its WATS lines.

In 1970, 19 cases of gross neglect in Florida were submitted to a central registry which doctors used to report cases to local juvenile courts. In the first 18 months of the new program, through March 1973, 31,828 children were reported "abused." Polansky et al., analyzed these figures, eliminating 3,500 cases which could not be defined clearly as neglected or abused. They then put the remaining figures into clear-cut categories of abuse vs. neglect. The result showed 21,635 neglected to 6,702 abused children, slightly higher than a ratio of 3:1. Among the "neglected," the authors found almost 7,000 children "unattended," and over 8,000 with "disorganized family life."

By April 1974, a gross total of more than 63,000 complaints had been received by the Florida central registry. Each call received in Jacksonville is immediately relayed to a social worker on call in the local community who starts an investigation at once. Persons in charge of the program say that between 60 to 63 percent of all complaints—from citizens, neighbors, relatives, schools, and others—are legitimate.

Fontana (1973) who prefers to use the term "maltreatment" instead of neglect, points to increases in New York City alone from 1,800 cases in 1969 to 10,000 in 1972. (New York State has a WATS system in its southwestern area, but it is not extended to New York City as yet.) "I cannot help but feel," says Fontana, "that the soaring statistics. . .are symptomatic of our violent and unhappy times . . .of the increased stresses that are confronting *all* society and the crest of violence that seems to be engulfing the world."

All of which leads up to the crucial point—*who* is the neglected child and what can be done for him.

Miss Sutherland, now retired, was Director of Division of Publications, Office of Public Affairs, SRS.

Notes

1) "Profile of Neglect," Polansky, Hally, and Polansky; DHEW-SRS Community Services Administration, 1975. (SRS) 75-23037.

Publications and Films

The editors of THE SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION RECORD regularly receive notification of the release of new publications and films of interest to readers.

Each issue of THE RECORD will carry a selected list of these publications and films with brief descriptions of their contents.

Please address all inquiries to the addresses given in the listing.

Directory of Social and Health Agencies of the City of New York (1975–76). William J. Smith, editor. Columbia University Press, 562 West 113th St., New York, N.Y. 10025. 680 pages. $20.

This directory provides a comprehensive but concise information about public and voluntary welfare and health agencies serving New York City. Government, educational, and religious organizations are included only if they offer services in the field of social welfare or closely related fields. Many national agencies are also included.

Agencies are listed in two ways: according to the service and function they perform and alphabetically.

Child Care: A Comprehensive Guide, Volume I: Rationale for Child Care Services: Programs vs. Politics. Stevanne Auerbach, Ph.D., and James A. Rivaldo, editors. Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011. $12.95. 251 pages.

Rationale for Child Care Services is the first in a new series designed as a continuing and expanding source of knowledge about child care services. These volumes serve as a practical guide for improving and redefining the quality and scope of these services. The other three volumes will be published over a 2-year period: Vol. II—Model Programs and their Components, Vol. III—Building Centers and Day Care Homes, and Vol. IV—Special Needs and Services.

Through articles by early childhood experts, the Guide shows how to create successful programs. Topics include ways to plan for comprehensive service, administration of communitywide programs, selection of facilities and significance of interior design.

Developments in Human Services, Volume II. Herbert C. Schulberg, Ph.D., and Frank Baker, Ph.D. Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011. 404 pages. $17.95 hardbound, $13.95 paperbound.

This second volume in the encyclopedic series *Developments in Human Services*, is now available in both a comprehensive hardcover edition and/or three paperbound separates.

Separate Number 1: *Developing Program Models for Human Services* by Mark A. Lawrence, M.D., Chief, Area A Community Mental Health Center, Washington, D.C. discusses different kinds of models such as comprehensive vs. specialized types of services, pointing out similarities and differences, and looks into the relationships between health and mental health subsystems.

Separate Number 2: *The Economics of Human Services* by Gerald Rosenthal, Dept. of Economics, Brandeis University discusses the effects of the post-war dynamics of human services and examines those factors in influencing demand and costs.

Separate Number 3: *Developing Human Services in New Communities* by Donald C. Klein, NTL Community Research & Action Laboratory discusses applications of behavioral science to environmental design in general, and to new community development in particular. Outlines the steps in deliberate allocation of resources (territorial, fiscal, and human) within the community.

Human Services Education and Practice: An Organic Model. Joann Chenault, Ed.D. Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011. 69 pages. $4.50.

Written for helpgivers throughout the community systems network—education, health, mental health, public administration, career development, and corrections, this book presents a unified conceptual model integrating the effective delivery of human services and the education of human services personnel. The model crosses the artificially imposed boundaries which hamper efforts to help those in need.

Human Services Education and Practice combines a clear vision of an organic helpgiving system with an astute awareness of operational-level programs and their problems. It will be useful for administrators and directors in developing or revising human service training programs. Educators in psychology, nursing, human resources, community health, social work and law will find this monograph to be an excellent bibliographic resource for human service issues.

Films

Johnny Boy. 16mm. Color. 10 min. Joyous Lake, Inc., P.O. Box 51134, Jacksonville Beach, Fla. 32250. $195 per print.

This film deals with the hard to place foster child. Shown here is the emotional turmoil of a child caught in a system which has great difficulty in finding a stable foster family placement for a 10-year-old black child.

Arrangements may also be made to preview the film for 48 hours without a charge.

Home for Supper. 11 min. Color. Division of Research Utilization, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Available on loan from the National Audiovisual Center, Washington, D.C. 20409.

The day hospital, an alternative to institutional care for the elderly, is the focus of this film.

Illustrated are the variety of daytime services provided, as part of a 3-year experimental program, to chronically ill and aging patients who continue to live in their own homes.

Although the services are mainly rehabilitative and recreational, social services and medical evaluation are offered as well.

The Neglected. Black and white. 30 min. International Film Bureau, Inc., 332 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60604. Sale: $225, rental: $15.

This film examines behavior which results in abused and neglected children. The film demonstrates how organizations like the Child Protective Services can change patterns of dangerous and unhealthy family relationships and help unstable people achieve acceptable standards of parenthood. The film advocates rehabilitation of families as an alternative to removal of children.

"What Causes AFDC Errors?"

KATHERINE BERRY and LAWRENCE GREENFIELD, PH.D.

The Federal Government's decision to reduce matching funds for those States who do not meet error reduction targets causes great concern and a flurry of activity in most States. The 1973 finding that there were payment errors in 40 percent of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children cases, led HEW to issue regulations which would exclude Federal funds from States if error rates were not reduced to 3 percent for ineligibility and 5 percent for overpayment and underpayment by June 30, 1975.

As part of the national and State effort to curb errors, the Research Unit of the Monmouth County Welfare Board, New Jersey, studied the errors committed within the agency to see if they were related to certain standard characteristics of the workers who determine welfare grants. Educational background, Civil Service score, and job experience were the characteristics of primary interest.

Is there a relationship between a worker's educational achievement and the frequency of agency errors? The question arises from revisions in the qualification requirements for certain Civil Service positions, and it has caused considerable debate among administrators. The controversy took root when income maintenance functions and social service delivery were separated. The change allowed the income maintenance technicians to make eligibility determinations for financial assistance to recipients. As a paraprofessional, the income maintenance technician minimally must have 2 years of college or a high school diploma and 2 years of relevant job experience.

Some administrators argue that in order to bring about improved income maintenance job performance, the position should be filled by college graduates. Others maintain that overqualified employees make errors out of boredom and indifference and that, consequently, continued or expanded use of paraprofessionals is the preferable course.

Compounding the argument concerning educational level and accuracy of worker performance has been the contention that Civil Service examination scores are the best measure of potential job competence. Others maintain that work experience is the critical factor in employee efficiency; these persons argue that high error rates are attributable to high levels of employee turnover.

The study reported here was undertaken to determine the relative merit of these arguments and to aid in the formulation of plans to reduce worker error in New Jersey. Besides the three training factors, the relationship between age and sex and the incidence of worker errors was also examined. Worker error information came from data gathered by the State's Corrective Action Panel.

The panel was born in April 1973. Its function is to reduce errors to Federal tolerance levels and, thereby, to avoid the exclusion of Federal funds which would be imposed. One of its first tasks was to review State quality control findings from the April to September 1973 base period. The conclusion of that review revealed that approximately 25 percent of all errors resulted from improper handling of in-

Table 1
Sample Description

	County A	County B	County C	County D	Total
Total number of workers	62	43	16	30	151
Sex					
male	12	11	8	8	39
female	50	32	8	22	112
Age					
25 and under	32	27	5	8	72
26* and over	30	16	11	22	79
Education					
high school	12	1	0	2	15
some college	22	14	9	7	52
bachelor degree	28	28	7	21	84
Experience					
6 months or less	11	5	0	7	23
7 to 13 months	18	24	4	5	51
14* months and over	33	14	12	18	77
Civil Service Score					
below 77.5	29	8	9	9	55
77.5* and above	22	17	7	10	56
missing data	11	18	0	11	40

*medians
Ranges: Age, 19 to 62; Education, High School Equivalency to Masters Degree; Experience, 1 month to 6 years 8 months; Civil Service score, below 70.0 to 92.8.

formation coming into the public welfare agencies. To combat this serious source of agency error and certain client errors, the panel established a spot check unit in each county welfare board. The units, which were established on February 1, 1974, review 25 percent of their total AFDC caseload annually.

Cases for review are selected monthly at random from a list of cases assigned for redetermination 3 months previously. Spot check workers interview clients for changes in circumstances that might account for incorrect grant payments. They prepare a spot check analysis report for each case reviewed.

The agency is charged with an error when a determination is made that an incorrect payment was made as the result of "the county welfare board's failure to act on information available to it." [1] This information is finally reported in terms of errors per agency.

The study reported here focuses upon errors per worker. The data were extracted directly from the individual spot check analysis reports which identify the income maintenance technician who is responsible for each agency error.

Sample

The information on worker errors was gathered from spot check analysis reports provided by four county welfare agencies. The reports were available from 3 to 5 months during the period February through June 1974. A count was obtained of the number of cases reviewed for each income maintenance technician and of the number of cases which contained errors caused by the worker's failure to handle properly the information which had been provided by the client. Errors which were caused by the client's failure to provide relevant information to the agency were not counted, nor was any distinction made between errors which resulted in overpayments, underpayments, or ineligibility. During the period under review, 151 income maintenance technicians in the four agencies had cases selected for review by the spot check units.

The data on workers' sex, age, amount of job experience, education, and Civil Service score were obtained from records provided by the personnel department in each of the cooperating agencies. Civil Service scores were available for only 111 workers.

Amount of experience was defined as the number of months of employment in the income maintenance division of the agency. Education was divided into three categories: completed high school, some college, and 4-year college graduate. (See Table 1).

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by means of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis [2]. Using this technique, the researchers measured the amount of variation in worker errors that was accounted for by each worker characteristic. The contribution of each variable was tested in successive steps, the contributions of preceding factors being controlled.

In the analysis of the Civil Service scores, statistical methods were used to account for the effects of the missing information. In addition to the analysis of each characteristic, the interactions of the three most critical factors—experience, education, and Civil Service score—were studied.

Table 2 shows the results. The sample included differing numbers of cases per worker. The effect of these differences, which accounted for 32.4 percent of the variation in number of errors, was first parcelled out in order to equate each worker in terms of the number of cases reviewed. The effect of each worker characteristic on the variation in the number of errors was then measured.

County proved to be responsible for 10 percent of the variation in worker errors and was the only substantive factor studied which had statistical significance.

Because of the importance of the county factor, mean scores of errors per worker were computed for each of the four county agencies. They ranged from −.5148 for County B which had the fewest errors per worker (after adjusting for the number of cases) to 1.0346 for County C, which had the greatest number of adjusted errors per worker. Counties B and D were intermediate. The difference between County C and each of the other counties was significant ($p<.01$ −.001) as was the difference between County D and County B. ($p<.01$). The remaining differences were not significant. The possible reasons for these county differences are discussed later.

In further analyses of the data, certain variables were systematically omitted from the equation and additional interactions were tested. These replications again indicated that there were no significant relationships between the variation in errors and the worker characteristics under study.

Implications

This study did not find any significant relationships between worker errors and the characteristics of age, sex, education, experience, or Civil Serv-

Table 2

Factor	Multiple R^2*	R^2 Increment**	F***	Level of Significance
Number of Cases Reviewed	.3249	.3249	71.71	.000
Counties	.4250	.1001	8.47	.01
Age	.4264	.0015	.46	NS
Sex	.4265	.0001	.01	NS
CSS: Missing Data	.4279	.0014	.36	NS
CSS	.4280	.0001	.02	NS
Education	.4340	.0060	.79	NS
CSS X Education	.4469	.0129	1.61	NS
Experience	.4483	.0014	.35	NS
Experience X Education	.4489	.0006	.07	NS
Experience X CSS	.4493	.0004	.10	NS

* Multiple R^2 indicates the cumulative amount of variation after the completion of each step in the analysis.

** The R^2 increment indicates the amount of variation accounted for by each factor.

*** The F test is a measure of significance of the variation accounted for by a given factor. The significance level indicates the probability of explaining this amount of variation by chance, e.g., p less than (<) .01 indicates a probability of less than 1 in 100, $p < .001$ a chance less than 1 in 1,000.

ice score of the worker. Not only did these factors fail to contribute independently to the variation in errors, but their joint effects accounted for less than 2½ percent of the variation in the adjusted error scores. The only factor in the study that had any significant effect on the number of errors committed by workers was that of county, which accounted for 10 percent of the variation in errors.

In comparing the four counties, no definitive conclusions could be reached about the nature of this county factor, but several possible relationships between error rates and structural or administrative factors within county agencies were compatible with the findings. In County C, where the workers performed specialized duties, they were found to make relatively more errors than in the remaining counties where workers were required to perform a variety of tasks with respect to their assigned cases. In County B, where the fewest errors were found, the workers were assigned the smallest caseloads (140). By comparison, in County D, which had a higher incidence of errors, workers were assigned larger caseloads (160).

The remaining counties were not comparable because of their organizational differences, but a relationship between frequency of errors and the number of cases which a worker handled is suggested.

Another possible factor was the ratio of supervisors to staff. In County B, which had the fewest errors, the number of workers assigned to each supervisor was smallest.

By contrast, a factor which probably had no bearing on these findings was the amount of compensation which the workers in these agencies received. County B, which had the fewest errors, also paid the lowest salaries.

Although factors associated with the internal structure and operation of agencies appear to have some influence upon worker error, a recent study which attempted to relate agency climate and structural differences to worker performance found that only 50 percent of the variation in performance could be accounted for by these factors. [4]

The characteristics under study were found to have no effect in four county agencies in New Jersey, but these findings may not hold true nationally. Civil Service examinations in other States may predict worker performance more accurately. The myriad of administrative configurations may interact with worker characteristics elsewhere to produce different results from those discovered in this study.

Further research is clearly warranted in order to determine the source of errors, whether it be the result of other worker characteristics besides those studied here, agency organization, or complex features of cases themselves. For States must reduce the number of errors committed within their own agencies in order to reach the announced tolerance levels. The search for solutions to the high rate of error is pressing as the Federal Government will not continue to share the costs of incorrect grants to welfare recipients.

Ms. Berry is a Research Specialist, Monmouth County Welfare Board. Dr. Greenfield was formerly Director of Research, Monmouth County Welfare Board and is now with the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare.

Requests for study reprints should be directed to Ms. Berry at 106 Apple St., New Shrewsbury, N.J. 07724.

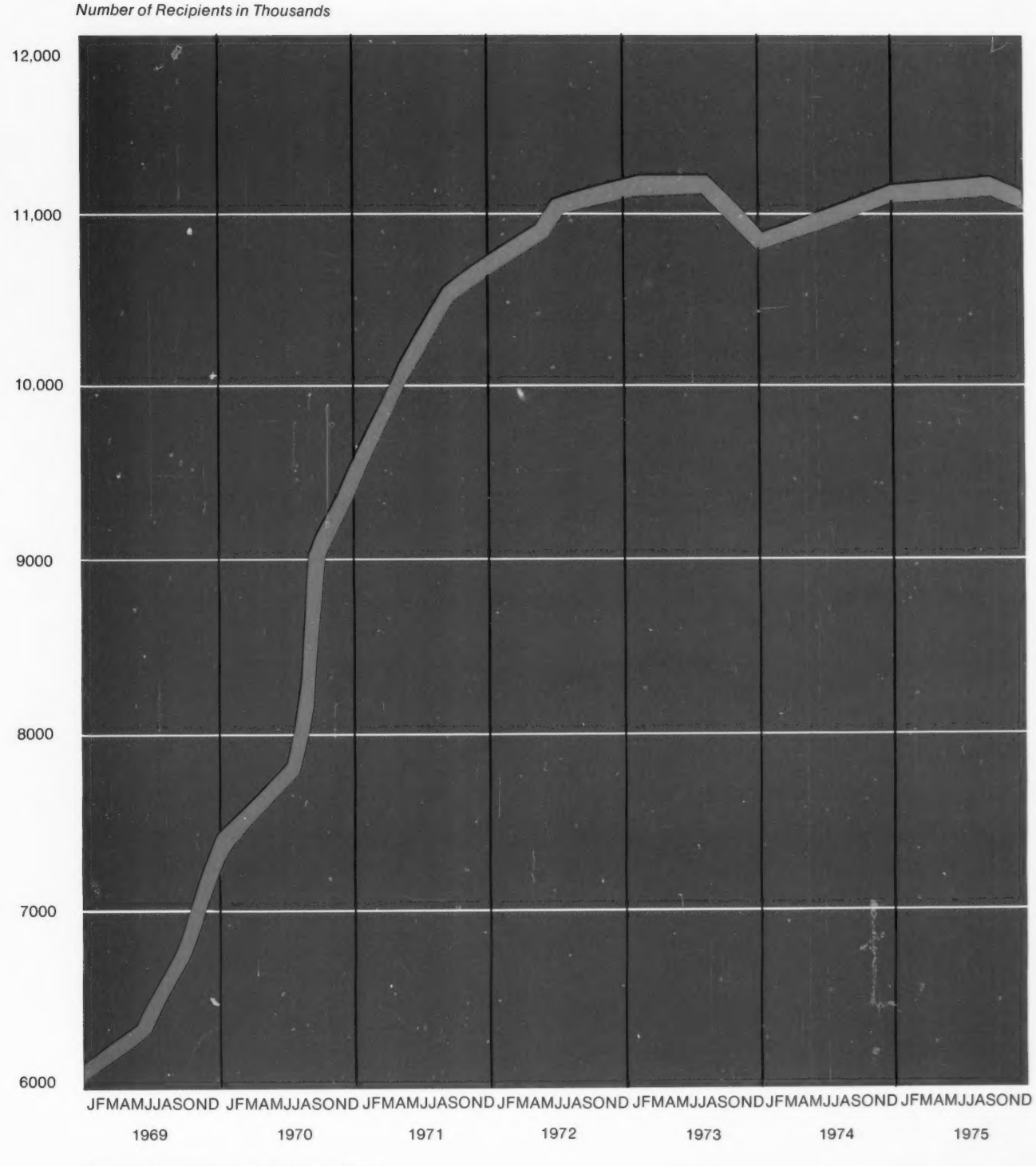
Notes and References

1) State of New Jersey, Division of Public Welfare, Circular Letter No. 74–1–1, January 22, 1974.

2) Kerlinger, Frederick N., and Pedbazar, Elazar J., *Multiple Regression in Behavioral Research* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); and Jacob Cohen, "Multiple Regression as a General Data Analytic System," *Psychological Bulletin* 70:6 (1968): pp. 426–443.

3) Olmstead, Joseph A. and Christensen, Harold E. Human Resources Research Organization. *Research Report No. 2, Effects of Agency Work Contexts: An Intensive Field Study, National Study of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Workers, Work and Organizational Contests, Vol. 1.* SRS 74–05405, December 1973, p. 116. The findings of this study are based upon self-reported estimates of social service personnel, not Spot Check Unit reports of Income Maintenance employees.

Total Number of AFDC Recipients Nationwide, January 1969 to August 1975



Based on figures from the National Center for Social Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

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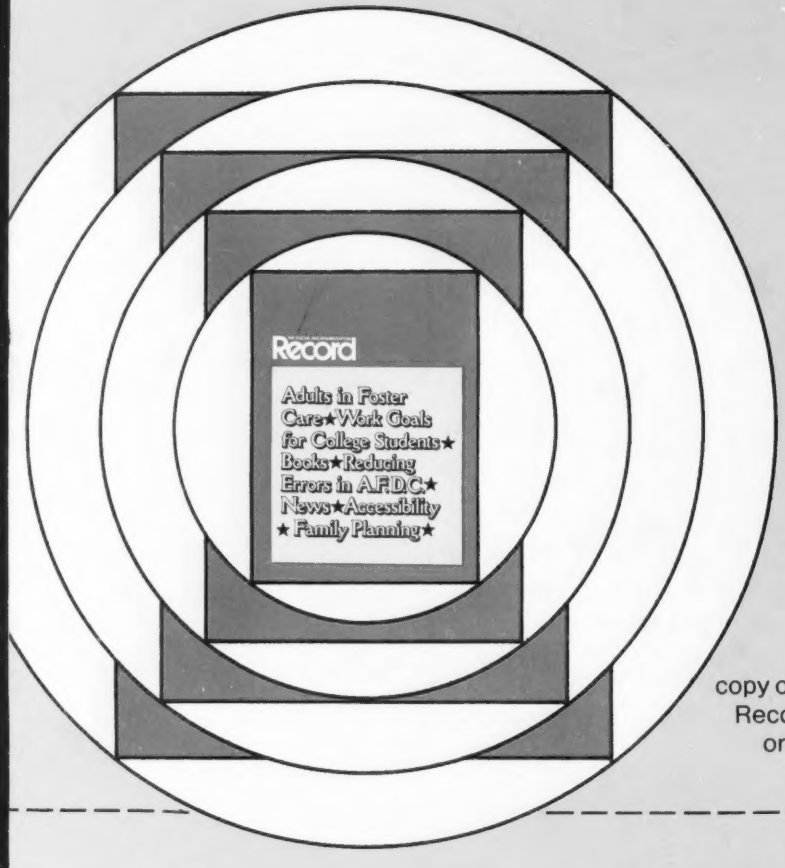
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